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ABSTRACT

This action research project was designed to implement a language arts program using multiple intelligences to develop more positive attitudes toward grammar instruction and to help promote the transfer of grammar skills to daily writing and speaking tasks. The targeted population consisted of second, fourth, and eighth grade students in four different school settings. Evidence of the existence of these problems was documented in student writing samples, survey questions, checklists, and assessments that indicated the students' academic performance and attitudes. During the intervention period, lessons and activities targeted the problem area of grammar education. Analysis of probable cause data revealed a great deal of controversy on the strategies of teaching grammar. Teachers are concerned over the lack of transfer of grammar skills into content areas. Students struggle to see the purpose of grammar instruction and its relationship to their daily communication skills. Environmental influences such as attitudes at home, in the media, and among peers are also factors in the attitudes of the students. Possible solution strategies are suggested in linguistic research. Activity oriented teaching methods that meet the needs of the different learning styles are encouraged, combined with a holistic, systematic approach to grammar instruction. The Shurley Method is a method that appears to meet these objectives. These methods may cause students' enthusiasm and confidence to increase. Heightened awareness and expectations by instructors may also raise student understanding and accountability. Postintervention data indicate the transfer of grammar skills into daily tasks and improved student attitudes toward grammar instruction. These results were consistent at all sites and in all classrooms studied. Appendixes contain consent forms, survey instruments, posttests, and the parent postsurvey.(Contains 54 references, and 9 figures and a table of data.) (Author/RS)

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IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

St. Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field-Based Masters Program

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Abstract

This action research project was designed to implement a language arts program using multiple intelligences to develop more positive attitudes toward grammar instruction and to help promote the transfer of grammar skills to daily writing and speaking tasks. The targeted population consisted of second, fourth, and eighth grade students in four different school settings. Evidence of the existence of these problems was documented in student writing samples, survey questions, checklists, and assessments that indicated the students' academic performance and attitudes. During the intervention period, lessons and activities targeted the problem area of grammar education.

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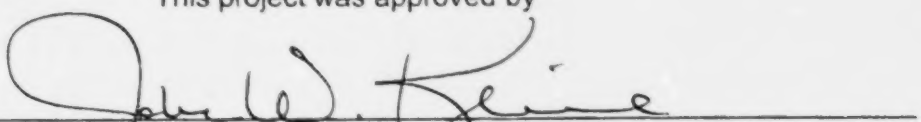

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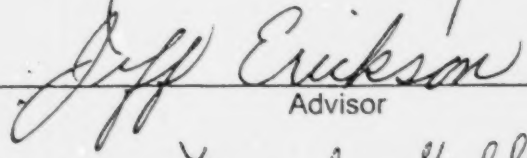

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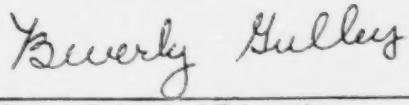

Dean, School of Education

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted second, fourth, and eighth grade classes experienced difficulty in learning and transferring grammar skills taught to their daily writing tasks. Students exhibited negative feelings toward grammar instruction. Evidence for the existence of the problem included artifacts of their informal and formal writing, survey questions, and assessments that indicated the students' academic performance.

Immediate Problem Context

This research included students in three school districts located within three communities. Site A and B were in urban settings, while Site C and D were in a rural setting.

Site A – Local Setting

Site A was a parochial school in a Midwest community of approximately 7,000 people. This was one of 14 religious-affiliated schools in the region that fed into a parochial high school. The students came from several surrounding cities as well as from the village in which it is located. There were 478 students of which 99% were affiliated with the religious community. Primarily, the students came from a 97% White background. Asian, Black, and Hispanic ethnicities were represented by approximately 1% each. This was a very stable community of learners with minimal changes in population. Occasionally, a student would

leave due to a family move or enter the local school for the academically gifted, or new students would move into the area. This site did not experience unusual attendance problems from its students. Tardiness, detentions, and suspensions were minimal; truancies were nonexistent at Site A. Just as the students came from a variety of cities, they also had varied socioeconomic backgrounds. The majority of the student body was upper-middle class or middle class. However, 5-6% qualified for free or reduced lunches. The students' households consisted of single-parent (4%), two-parents/separate households (3%), and two-parents/same household (93%). The students participated in diocesan sports (basketball, track, soccer, cheerleading) and extra-curricular activities (Scholastic Bowl, speech, drama, choir, band, community service projects). The students also participated in community sporting events and state-sanctioned speech competitions. The athletes and academic scholars brought home trophies, medals, and honors to the school. Many of the eighth-grade students participated in French or Spanish instruction four days a week at the parochial high school as part of their daily schedule. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program was presented at two grade levels (A. Cleary, personal communication, February 19, 2001).

Among the 26 teachers for grades K-8 were a collaborative teacher, a technology coordinator, two physical education teachers who taught grades K-4 or grades 5-8, a music teacher, and a student advisor. There was one religious teacher; the rest were lay teachers. All were female and White. The staff had an average of 10 years of experience. Two currently had their master's degree. In addition, a Title I teacher was working to assist grades K-6 students in the school building. Prior to this, students needing additional academic or motor skills attention were accommodated before or after school in public school programs. The student advisor scheduled "friendly visits" with all students early in the year so they felt

comfortable discussing any future problems. Through counseling of children and parents, this advisor dealt with issues before they became problems. Lines of communication were maintained between home and school through telephone conversations, class and school newsletters, and formal and informal parent-teacher conferences. The three kindergarten classes had 20 students each; the other grade levels had two classes with 25-30 students each. The school's mission statement affirmed its commitment to providing a quality K-8 religious co-education for parish and other eligible students.

The teachers and administration received a great deal of support from parent volunteers. The students benefited from an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and athletic committee. The PTO provided for the appreciation of art through an all-school fine arts day and monthly picture person programs at all grade levels. They also provided funds for continuing education for the teachers as well as the classroom "extras." The athletic committee made sports involvement possible for the students and profitable for the school program.

Site A was a regular division classroom located on the lower level of an all brick, two-story building. It was built in 1953. An addition was added in 1995 that housed the library, technology center, junior high classrooms, a gym, and cafeteria where hot lunches were prepared daily. The technology center was equipped with a scanner, digital camera, 24 computers with dual-jack headphones and Internet access. Students used Internet-based activities and various word processing programs. Story writing programs and instruction in Power Point were also offered (K. Schaffnit, personal communication, February 21, 2001). The two second-grade classrooms shared a primary hall with first through fourth grade classrooms, the cooperative teacher, the Title I teacher, and the student advisor's office. The

uniformed-students entered each morning into the lower level from the playground, which was visible from the back bank of windows in the classroom. There were hooks and bins in the hall to store outerwear, hats, and lunches. Across from the room were the boys' and girls' lavatories. In the room, all the students' graded papers were in cubbyholes. Students were typically seated in groups of four. One bookcase was filled with Accelerated Reader books. Other books were sorted into bins designated as science, religion, social studies, poetry, award winning, book and tape sets, and reference materials (encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac). Five computers, one of which had Internet access connected the room to the Internet for curriculum enrichment. The other four had network software installed for taking Accelerated Reader tests or for playing educational games. For extended learning, GeoSafari skill packs and globes were used. Board games, Trivial Pursuit, and other learning tools were available. There were six chess sets available in the room with three always set up and battling on any given day. Bulletin boards were devoted to the daily math meeting, phonics, handwriting (manuscript and cursive), the special person of the week, class jobs, photos, and changing social studies topics. Science charts and miscellaneous topic charts were secured to the blinds that covered one wall of the classroom. The students' art was displayed in the hall and in the classroom. The overhead was used daily for varied subjects. A carpeted area was used for math meetings, sustained silent reading, and group reading activities.

On a daily basis, the Saxon math program, the Scott Foresman reading series, and a religion series were used. Approximately 60 minutes were spent daily on Saxon math instruction and on the reading series that included phonics, oral language, and writing components. Two days a week, the students learned from the Saxon phonics curriculum, participated in physical education class, had handwriting instruction following the Zaner-

Bloser method, and studied science units aligned with the state goals, as prepared by the second and third grade teachers. One day a week students had music instruction with choral and hand instruments in the church office building attached to the school. Library/technology instruction, art, and social studies instruction were covered weekly. Written curriculum guides that met the state objectives were used for designing schedules. Students needing extra attention met with the collaborative teacher three times a week, and the Title I teacher met with K-6 students as scheduled.

Those students involved in chorus met before school. Band was held during the day, as were French and Spanish language classes at the parochial high school. Every fall second through eighth graders took the appropriate level of the Terra Nova Form A Complete Battery Test and the Terra Nova Form A Complete Battery Test *Plus*. Students in grades four and seven took the Terra Nova Writing Exam. The students consistently scored above average on these assessments. A school bus was available for use to transport students to educational outlets such as museums, the planetarium, theater productions, and science venues (caves, ecological outings). Pre-care and aftercare programs were available for a fee. The teaching staff did not monitor these.

Parents paid tuition based on their parish affiliation and number of students. Partial payments were made on a weekly or monthly basis. The 2000-2001 family tuition rates are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

2000-2001 Tuition Rates for Parishioner and Non-Parishioner Families

Number of Students	Parishioner	Non Parishioner
1 student	$1,664	$1,964
2 students	$2,496	$3,928
3+ students	$2,829	$4,836

The parish subsidized the school based on needs beyond what tuition covered. If a parishioner encountered an inability to afford the entire cost, an accommodation could be made. The average expenditure per student was $2,343 (A. Cleary, personal communication, February 19, 2001).

Site B – Local Setting

As reported in the 2000 School Report Card, there were 350 students enrolled in this school for grades 6-8. The racial ethnic group consisted of 62.9% White, 34.3% Black, 1.7% Hispanic and 1.1% Asian-Pacific Islanders (2000 School Report Card). The Black population had grown by 10% over the last four years while the White population had declined by 7% over the same time. Forty-two percent of the students were considered low-income, and 0.9% were limited-English proficient. The biggest change in student demographics was the percent of students receiving free or reduced lunches. During 1995, only 24.7% of the students were on free or reduced lunch. During 2000, 42.6% of the students received it. This sudden jump had surpassed the state's average for free and reduced lunches, but it was still below the district's average of 60.3% (Demographic Narrative from school Student Achievement Plan, 2000). It appeared the school's general makeup had shifted to an increased number of minority students and students' families who had lower incomes. The attendance rate at this

site was 94.3%; the mobility rate was 30.7%, and chronic truancy was 0.9%. The average class size was 21.7 (2000 School Report Card).

Of the 28 faculty members at this site, 18 were regular division teachers, 7 were special education, and 3 were music instructors. A principal, assistant principal, one full-time and one part-time secretary performed administrative duties. A library manager and part-time counselor were also part of the staff. The average teaching experience of this staff was 14.9 years. Fifty-seven percent had bachelor's degrees, and 43.2% had a master's and above. The average teacher salary was $43,328. The pupil-teacher ratio was 19.9:1. One hundred percent of the students' parents or guardians had personal contact with the school staff as compared with 96.5% in the district and 97.2% in the state. "Personal contact" included parent-teacher conferences, parental visits to school, school visits to home, telephone conversations and written correspondence (2000 School Report Card).

The two-story building at this site was built in 1936-37 with the help of Public Works Administration (P.W.A.) funds. There were 14 classrooms for grades 1-8, a kindergarten room and an auditorium/gymnasium. Enrollment was 276. In 1948-49, a four-room addition was built to relieve crowded conditions with an enrollment of 597. A third addition was built in 1953-54 to add a library and three more classrooms when enrollment reached 631. With an increased enrollment of 725 in 1958, eight more classrooms were added along with some changes and improvements of existing classrooms. In the fall of 1986, the district reorganized and made this site a middle school housing grades 5-8, plus grades 5-8 special education classes. A new gym and enlarged library were built in 1991 to meet the needs of this new student configuration.

Rooms were numbered to be consistent on both floors, 100-126 and 200-226, respectively. Research was conducted in a regular division classroom of eighth grade language arts students. The room was located at the end of the west wing in the seventh and eighth grade hall on the first floor. The walls of the room were used primarily for display, and the north end wall had an extended dry-erase board. Desks were portable and could be arranged in rows or groups, as need dictated. Many bookcases, cabinets and a sink helped serve the needs of the teacher and students. In the classroom, there was an overhead projector and screen and one on-line computer station. With the addition of the accessibility to a television, videocassette recorder, laser disc portable station, technology was evident in the classroom. The building also housed an updated computer laboratory that students were required to use as a class and was also available for classroom teachers to use on request (School Faculty Handbook, 2000).

Grade levels and subjects departmentalized the school. There were also six special education classrooms that consisted of four self-contained classes (one behavior disordered, one learning disabled, one emotionally mentally handicapped, and one mild mentally impaired) and two trainable mentally handicapped classrooms. Core subjects were taught an average of 43 minutes per day for mathematics, science and social studies and 86 minutes for language arts. Testing of core subjects was done with the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the state standards achievement test. Review of the 2000 School Report Card showed students at this site met or exceeded district and state levels on the state test in the language art areas. The state test was designed to measure the extent to which students were meeting learning standards. These test scores were used as "benchmarks" or baselines for purposes of evaluating and continually adjusting curriculum to meet the needs of students. (Planned

Improvement Report for School and District, 2000). Other daily student programs at this site included art, physical education, French (selected students), library, computer lab and music. The extensive music program included choices of band, jazz band, orchestra ensemble and choir. Extracurricular activities were numerous. To enhance student achievement there were Scholar's Cup, Scholastic Bowl, Math Counts, extended day (a reading program), drama club, and yearbook. Athletic activities included cheerleading and competitive teams of basketball, softball, track and volleyball. Intramural sports were also offered. There was a strong parent support element as shown by the Parent Teacher Organization. Community support was shown by corporate sponsorship of a local insurance association and a local bank. The adopted mission statement of this school emphasized the goal to meet the individual needs of all students and to challenge each student to become lifelong learners and responsible decision makers. It also promoted communication between parents, school and community and the desire to provide a safe, positive environment (Student Achievement Plan, 2000).

Site C – Local Setting

Site C was in a school that consisted of grades 4-8 with the fourth and fifth grade in a separate wing, which was built in 1969. There were two sections of fourth grade and three sections of fifth grade. Grades 6-8 were on an eight-block schedule where classes met on alternating days for a 70-minute activity time. The junior high classes were held in a three-story section of the school, which was built in 1918.

Site C was a fourth grade classroom with 18 students. The classroom had one teacher and received no assistance from classroom aides. It was adjacent to the other fourth-grade classroom and across the hall from the 4^{th}-5^{th}-grade special education room. It was a large classroom and contained portable desks, a sink, two windows, a classroom library, a round

table, and three computers. The classroom also contained three big bulletin boards, which displayed a large, activity calendar, computer information, a map, and grammar technique hints. The main computer was equipped with the Accelerated Reading (AR) program. The students took tests on the AR program after they had read books on their own. The AR program evaluated the students' knowledge and understanding of the book. The students also had access to a computer lab with 25 computers, which was shared by the whole building. The computer lab was equipped with Internet services. The students went to the computer lab one or two times a week. Once a week, the students had art and library instruction for 30 minutes. Physical education class was every day for 30 minutes. The students in the fourth grade were in Site C for language arts for one hour and 45 minutes a day and science for 40 minutes. The students were with another teacher for math and social studies for one hour and 45 minutes a day.

Site C had a total enrollment of 244 students. Its major racial ethnic group was 98.8% White, 0.4% Blacks, 0.4% Hispanics, and 0.4% Asian Pacific Islanders. Students at Site C were from 24.2% low-income families. The attendance rate was 95.9% and the mobility was 5.6%. Site C did not have any chronic truants (2000 School Report Card).

The racial ethnic group of the faculty at Site C was 100% White. The average years of teaching experience was 18 years (Seniority List, 2000). Four of these teachers had their master's degrees. There were four special education teachers, who had four assistants. One of these special education teachers had a master's degree. There were three physical education instructors who were shared with the high school and the elementary building. An art instructor provided instruction for all grades, two days a week. Site C had one full-time Title I teacher who serviced grades 4-8. The school librarian, school psychologist, social

worker, and a speech pathologist were shared with the other schools in the district. The principal was responsible for grades K-8 located in two separate buildings. The school also had full-time lunch monitors and a recess aide. Teachers communicated with the parents through parent-teacher conferences, telephone conversations, letters, and agendas. The school's mission statement strived to accept all students as they were and instill a desire to learn while feeling safe and secure. The goal was for the students to become confident, responsible, and respectful citizens.

A school-wide spelling bee was held once a year. Site C had a D.A.R.E. program for the fifth grade. The fifth grade also received visits from a local banker, who explained banking, savings, and investments. Each student opened and contributed to a savings account during the school year. The fourth and fifth grades also participated in a conflict resolution class called Conflict and Resolution Education (C.A.R.E.). Extra-curricular activities for the junior high included basketball, baseball/softball, track, history fair, yearbook, Scholastic Bowl, and Science Olympiad. Biddy ball and a latch key program were provided by community organizations at Site C. The local library was less than a block away from the school. The students in Site C took the Stanford Achievement Test and the state test. The district paid for one field trip a year for each classroom. Site C also had a Challenge Program for gifted students that met once a week.

Site D – Local Setting

Site D was located in a small rural community. Though formerly a K-12 grade building serving only the local community, the school housed kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms and two special education classrooms. There was one class per grade in self-contained classrooms for kindergarten through fifth grade. The junior high staff included a

language arts teacher, a social science and physical education teacher, a math and science teacher, and a math, physical education and computer teacher. The music, art, computer, and physical education teachers were shared by kindergarten through eighth grades. The staff consisted of a principal, two secretaries, two reading aides, two playground and lunchroom aides, two cooks, and two janitors. The gifted instructor, librarian, social worker, speech teacher, Title I teacher, and psychologist were shared by other schools in, and in some cases, out of the district. The students lived in town or were bussed from nearby unincorporated communities. The enrollment of the school was 166, with 99.4% White and 0.6% Black students. Low-income families represented 23.5% of the student population, and all of the students are English proficient. The attendance rate was 96.5%, with a 10.3% mobility rate. Truancy was not a major concern, and the average class size was 20 (1999 School Report Card).

The mission statement of this reflected the desire of the staff to be dedicated to the task of providing the best education possible to all students. With this responsibility in mind, the school strived to instill a life long desire to learn. They tried to accomplish this goal through a diverse developmental program of academics and co-curricular activities which encourage parental and community involvement and support. It was their goal that students felt safe and secure in their school environment, while become confident, responsible, respectful, and productive citizens of their school, community, and country.

The school structure has evolved over a period of several years. The main part of the building, housing the offices and majority of the classrooms, was dedicated in 1960 along with the cafeteria and gymnasium. The older parts of the building that were still in use were built in 1928 and 1937. The music room, science classroom and laboratory, library, special

education rooms, storage and maintenance areas, and the teachers' workroom were located in the older sections of the school. Some areas of the older portions of the building were vacant.

The targeted classroom at Site D was a fourth grade classroom with a large student library. The windows on the south wall were cheerful in the winter but warm in the spring and late summer due to direct sun and reflected heat from the asphalt playground outside the room. There was no air conditioning, but two windows opened to allow some airflow. The walls were not very soundproof which sometimes caused problems when attempting quiet activities in the classroom. A large bulletin board covered the top three-fourths of the south wall, and there were smaller ones on the east and west walls. The decorations on these bulletin boards were usually stationary and related to fourth-grade content areas. They featured seasonal borders and accents. The library and computer occupied the northeast corner, and the storage and coat closets were located in the northwest corner. Student desks were regularly moved around the classroom, typically in groups of four. The teacher's desk was relatively stationary in the southeast corner. Other items of interest were the new state, national, and world maps located over the dry erase board on the west (front) wall of the classroom, the overhead projector, additional bookshelves, and a compact disc player.

The classroom schedule was worked around two 35 minute art periods, three 30 minute music periods, five 30 minute physical education periods, one 30 minute library class, and one 30 minute enrichment class per week that involved the entire class. Special pullout classes such as speech, special education, Title I, social work, and challenge class involved small groups or individuals and affected scheduling. Short-term classes such as computer, which was provided 30 minutes per week of one quarter and Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), which was offered in the spring for 45 minutes per week for five weeks, must be

considered in scheduling. The content classes averaged two hours per day of language arts, one hour per day of mathematics, 45 minutes per day of social science, and 45 minutes per day of science. These time allotments were flexible, depending on the daily schedule.

The Surrounding Community

Sites A and B are located in a mid-sized metropolitan area of 1606 square kilometers situated on a river in the Midwest. The population of this area was 181,126 with a population density of 112.8 persons per square kilometer. The area's population had changed less than 10% in the last ten years. Approximately 26% of the population was under 18 years old. The ethnic mix was 80.9% White, 15.1% Black, 2.1% Hispanic, 0.2% Native American and 1.7% Asian- Pacific Islanders. The education level of the area was 50% high school graduates and 12% college graduates. Homeowners constituted 64% of the population. The per capita income was $14,039; 13.5% were below poverty level. The effective buying income was $4.9 billion annually (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

Agriculture had historically been prominent in this area, but it was also supported by industrial and service economies. The world's largest manufacturer of earthmoving equipment was headquartered in this area. In recent years, the area had a growth of its business and industrial base. Approximately 15% of the area's population was employed by industry. Service industries, such as the three local hospitals, employed about 5% of the population and had shown continued growth. Educational institutions included the public school districts, private school sector, and two higher education institutions. A teaching hospital employed another 3% of the population. The unemployment rate for the last 20 years in this area had remained under 5% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

Homes of this area varied from old mansions overlooking the river and large new executive-style homes to public housing units. The largest growth area was in the northern section. However, mid-size homes dominated most of the area. The average selling price for a single-family home in 1999 was $97,691 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). Churches of many faiths met the spiritual needs of the community.

Numerous retailers that generated $3 billion in sales annually provided necessities of daily living. There were also more than 65 banks, credit unions, and savings institutions that supported a strong financial foundation (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

Recreational and cultural opportunities in this area were numerous. The nearby river offered boating, fishing, and water activities. Many people were participants or observers of various sports. Cultural offerings included theater, opera symphonies, museums, and other fine art programs.

The area also supported a major newspaper and small neighborhood newspapers. In addition to network television programming, a variety of additional selections were available through cable and digital networking. Direct TV was also a popular choice in this area. The variety of radio broadcasting was vast due to the proximity of other metropolitan areas. Local interest in the schools was stimulated by access to this varied local media coverage.

Site A – District Context

Site A was 1 of 46 elementary schools in the diocese. The diocese stretched far beyond the edges of the community's boundaries. The principal and pastor of each school handled academic and non-academic issues that arose autonomously with input from the diocesan governing boards if the school's leadership felt the necessity for intervention. The Diocesan

Office of Education had a superintendent, a director of religious education, and associated in both areas (A. Cleary, personal communication, February 19, 2001).

The Diocesan Annual Report 2000–2001 reported a total of 12,082 students in the elementary schools of which 5,999 were boys and 6,083 were girls. The elementary schools employed 811 full and part-time personnel, including principals. Of that total, 787 were lay teachers (teachers who were not members of a religious order), and 24 were religious teachers. No information was provided regarding racial-ethnic mix, gender makeup, salary, education and operating costs, or years of teacher experienced at the diocesan level.

Site B – District Context

The district administrative structure consisted of a central office and building. The structure of the central office was one superintendent, four assistant superintendents and a controller-treasurer. There were several administrative posts assigned for the many divisional services. The building administration consisted of 37 principals, 18 assistant principals and a number of deans and counselors. There were also several special education administrative positions.

There were a total of 1,115 full-time teachers in the district with 21.8% male and 78.2% female. The ethnic group consisted of 91.8% White, 7.1% Black, 0.6% Hispanic, 0.4% Asian and 0.0% Native American. The average years of teaching experience were 15.0. The percent of teachers with a bachelor's degree was 52.9% and with a master's degree and above was 47.0%. The pupil-teacher ratio was 19:1, and the pupil-administrator ratio was 202.9:1. The average teacher salary was $40,881, and the average administrator salary was $70,234. The average 1999-2000 operating expenditure per pupil was $7,490 as compared to the

average state operating expense of $7,146. Total district expenditure for 1999-2000 was $115,530,734 (2000 School Report Card).

The Surrounding Community

Site C was set in a small, rural town of 3,000. It was located 12.5 kilometers west of a mid-sized metropolitan area situated on a river in the Midwest. The town residents worshipped at their choice of seven churches. It had many small businesses to meet the community's needs. The community was 98.8% White, 0.1% Black, 0.7% Hispanic, 0.1% Asian, and 0.3% Native American. (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Family farms occupied the land around the town. Many people drove 30 minutes to the nearby city for employment. The town had a dinner theater, three town parks, and an annual cultural event with music, food, and crafts. (Chamber of Commerce, 2000). According to the 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census report, the median income was $22,500. There were 766 households below poverty level. The population of the community was slowly aging. This was a possible cause for some objection to the proposed referendum to build a new school, which would house all grades for the whole district.

The surrounding community of Site D was a small village with a population of 800 that provided a safe and secure hometown atmosphere. The community was 98.9% White, 0.3% Black, 0.3% Hispanic, 0.1% Asian, and 0.1% Native American (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Most people commuted 15.6 kilometers to cities for employment, recreation, shopping, and cultural activities. Approximately one-third of the students were bussed to the school from the countryside and two small, unincorporated areas. The village had a café, church, gas station and grocery, bank, fire station, library, and a few other small businesses. Through the efforts of community members, a community center had recently been

completed, fulfilling the dream of a lifelong citizen who donated the funds. Most of the homes in the community were middle-class, single-family dwellings. According to the 1990 Census, the median home value was $32,700 and the median income per household was $25,682 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990).

The village was settled in 1857 and incorporated in 1869. It was governed by a village board, which included a president and six board members elected by the citizens.

Site C and Site D – District Context

Sites C and D were in a medium-sized district found in a rural area. The district was about 15.6 kilometers long and 6.25-9.4 kilometers wide. It included five small towns located about 4.4 kilometers apart. In the district, there were two K-3 buildings, two 4-8 buildings, one K-8 building, and one 9-12 building. The total population of students was 1,372. The racial ethnic mix was 98.3% White, 1.1% Black, 0.3% Hispanic, and 0.2% Asian-Pacific Islander. The district student population was 100% English proficient, and 20.2% of the population was considered low income. The district teachers were 100% White, 71.9% female, and 28.1% male. The student attendance record for the district was 95.1%. The mobility rate was 11.2%, and the chronic truancy was 1.0%. The average class size was 19. The pupil-teacher ratio was 15.5:1, and the pupil-administrator ratio was 249.5:1. The operating expenditure per pupil was $6,002. The average teacher salary was $36,402, and the administrator average salary was $68,628 (2000 School Report Card).

National Context of the Problem

Grammar instruction is an issue that continues to frustrate teachers whose efforts to teach correct grammar usage, spelling, and punctuation conflict with the expectations of the public toward the same (Allender, 2000). Even educators cannot agree on the methodology

and importance of grammar instruction (Einarsson, 1999; Allen, 1999). However, the lack of student achievement in grammar has caused concern nationally (Allender, 2000). SAT verbal scores began to drop in the early sixties, with the greatest decline occurring from 1963-1979. The scores have continued to stay low for the last 20 years (Ravitch, 1996). Students are graduating from high school, able, but not fully prepared to succeed in their college classes. Nearly one third of college freshmen need to take remedial coursework when they arrive on campus because they are not "college-ready" (Levinson, 2001).

There are two competing views of grammar that can be explained in their definitions. The first is the "errors-based view of grammar," which simply means "the rules for correct writing." A more holistic view of grammar is defined as "the study of language, in particular one's own language, to look for underlying principles and patterns that make language work" (Einarsson, 1999, p.2). In other words, instead of looking for errors in isolated sentences, a literary paper is evaluated for the meaning and purpose it successfully conveys. Because of these differing viewpoints, educators often misunderstand grammar, which hinders effective instruction (Larsen-Freeman, 1995).

Environmental and societal attitudes influence the effectiveness of grammar instruction. There is a large gap in the language experiences of children in high-income families and the children of low-income families. Most high-income children enter kindergarten having heard twice the vocabulary and understanding twice the meanings and language conventions of the typical low-income student (Hirsch, Jr., 2001). A high correlation also exists between the students' grammar usage and the language they hear modeled in their homes and community. Typically, students' nonstandard speech patterns stem from the habits developed in the home, and those habits appear to occur due to society's general disregard of grammatical "rules"

(Renwick, 1994). Television and the media have contributed to society's lack of concern in grammatical correctness. The saturation of popular culture by the media has contributed to the lack of vocabulary and verbal skills prevalent in today's generation of students (Ravitch, 1996).

Many students do not see the need for formal grammar instruction or usage. The students do not understand the rules, think that they are too hard to remember, and see them as inconsistent and complex. In an effort to meet the needs of the students, teachers are not insisting that the students learn the rules. The teachers are counting on the students to recognize their mistakes based on how their sentences sound (Renwick, 1994). The argument against this theory is that most students write without listening to what they are writing or how they are saying it. The students simply do not listen to their own words. In the same way, many students fail to grasp the point of grammatical rules and correct punctuation. They have difficulty seeing the connection of grammatical rules and correct punctuation in communicating their ideas effectively (Kalkavage, 1998).

> Verbal communication is a vital life skill. Learning to write clearly and effectively remains at the very heart of the educational enterprise, grammar must be seriously taught, not as a dead relic, but as a necessary and logical component. Teachers, parents, and professional writers must resist the pressure to dismiss the conventions of grammar as merely the antiquated rules of an irrelevant past (Lynn, 1993, p. 69).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Students, who struggle with grammar usage, even after much instruction on the subject, have presented a challenge for language instructors. As early as kindergarten, students have been taught that sentences begin with capital letters and end with periods. Yet, when questioned, middle school teachers reported being frustrated about their students' writing skills. Improper capitalization, incorrect punctuation, and run-on sentences were just a few of the mistakes described. These and many other skills have been taught and practiced, reviewed and assessed countless times in grammar classes only to be forgotten during other writing assignments. The lack of transfer of grammar skills into content areas may be due to students lacking confidence in their own writing ability or simply not realizing the importance of learning and using correct grammar. Teachers tend to teach grammar the way that they, themselves, were taught. The attitudes of the instructors seem to be the result of their own lack of confidence in their ability to teach grammar and frustration with the environmental stimuli that they observe influencing their students. This study has been based on data collected at four targeted schools in three different grade levels. Information was gathered through the use of teacher, parent, and student surveys, combined with student reflections and

informal teacher interviews. Believing grammar skills should be reinforced in all aspects of communication, the surveys focused primarily on the almost always answers.

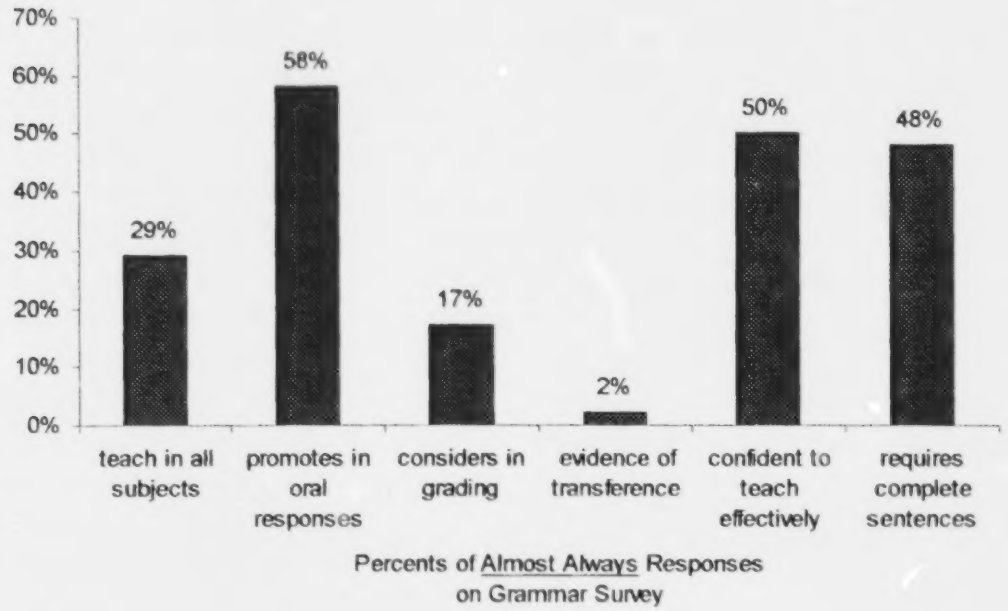

Figure 1. Teacher Survey of Grammar Skills

Teachers at the targeted schools were asked their opinions about the grammar skills of their students at their respective sites. Figure 1 indicates the percentage of teachers that answered almost always. The grammar skill questions highlighted from the survey on Figure 1 are: grammar skills are taught in other subjects, correct grammar in oral responses are promoted, grammar skills are considered in grading, transference of taught skills are evident, teachers are confident in background knowledge necessary to teach grammar, and students are required to respond in complete sentences.

The results of the teacher survey indicated that 29% of the teachers almost always taught grammar skills in subjects other than language. Teachers also said that 58% of them almost always promoted correct grammar in student's oral responses, and 48% of them almost

always required their students to write responses in complete sentences. However, only 17% of them indicated that they almost always considered grammar skills in grading. Teachers only saw evidence of their students almost always transferring grade appropriate skills to their written work across the curriculum 2% of the time. Finally, the survey notes that 50% of the teachers felt they have the background knowledge necessary to teach grammar effectively.

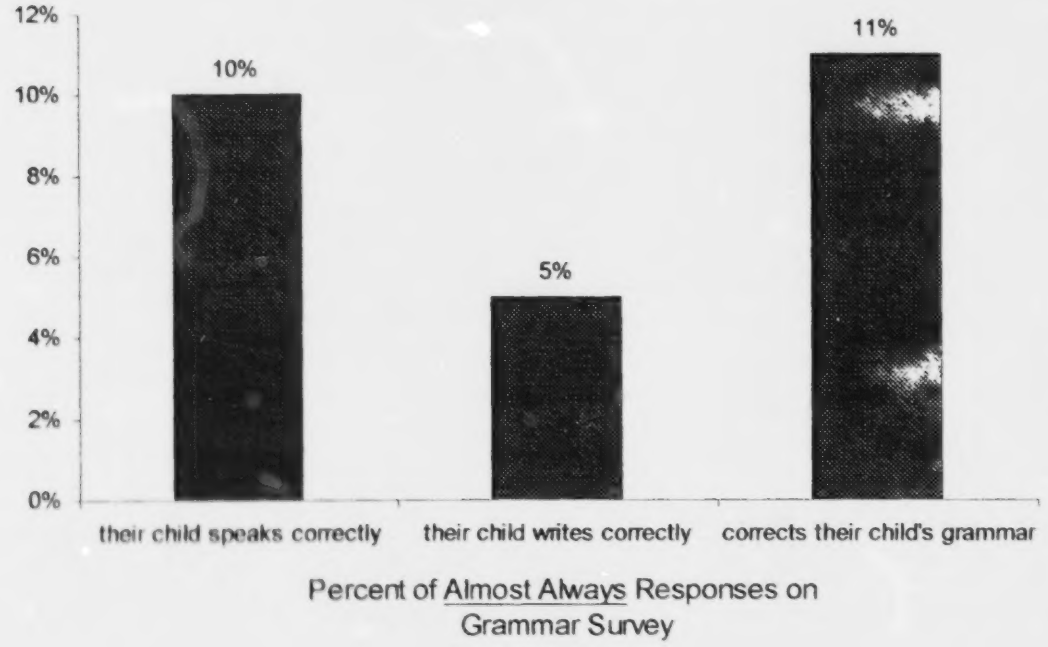

Figure 2. Parent Survey of Grammar Skills

The pre-intervention parent survey indicated that parents felt correct grammar is vitally important in their daily communication. In Figure 2, parents noted they were aware of their children's difficulty with the language when speaking or writing, but found they corrected their children's grammar only slightly more than 10% of the time. Parents also felt their child speaks grammatically correct 10% of the time and writes correctly only 5% of the time.

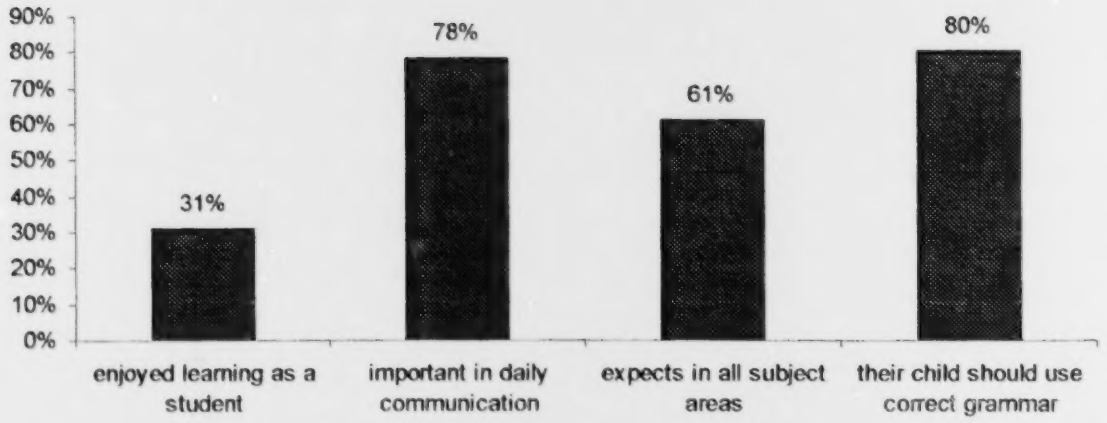

Figure 3. Parent Survey of Grammar Skills

Figure 3 indicates that while almost 80% of the parents felt strongly about the importance of using correct grammar themselves, only slightly more than 60% expected correct grammar to be used across the curriculum. Parents overwhelmingly believed their children should use correct grammar. One parent noted that it is very important to teach these skills early since it is more difficult to unlearn improper grammar. Approximately 30% of the parents surveyed indicated they enjoyed studying grammar skills almost always. This parallels the students' responses.

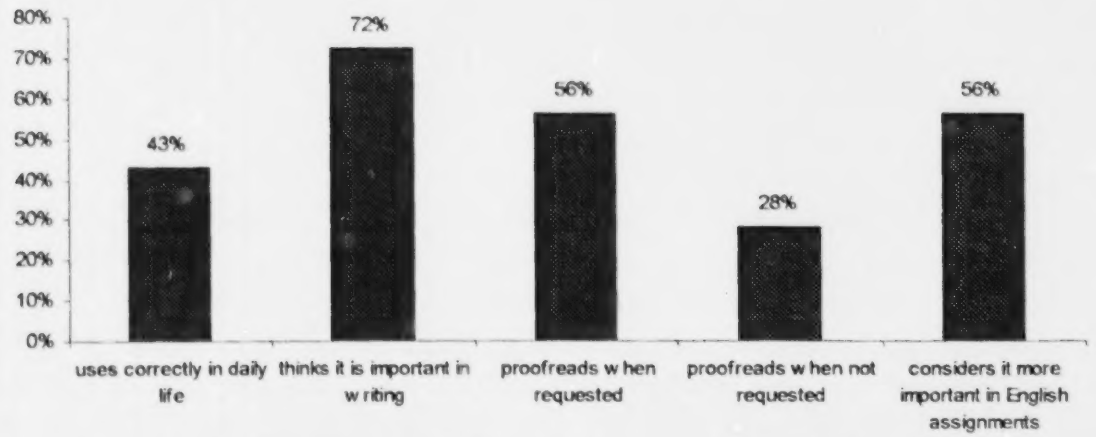

Figure 4. Student Survey of Grammar Skills

Students of the targeted classes were surveyed prior to intervention. Figures 4 and 5 show the students' responses to the survey questions. The survey indicated that 43% of the students believed they almost always used correct grammar in their daily communication, and 72% of the students thought it important to use proper grammar when they write. However, while 56% of the students proofread papers for correct grammar, if teacher requested, only 28% of the students did it on their own without teacher request. These responses indicate that while students perceived their own correct grammar usage as questionable, but particularly important in writing, they did not necessarily take steps to ensure their writing contained it. When the students were given an assignment in English classes, they were more concerned about being grammatically correct as their response of 56% indicates. Students do not, therefore, see as much importance of using grammatically correct writing in other subjects. This supports the teacher observation that correct grammar usage is not being used across curriculum.

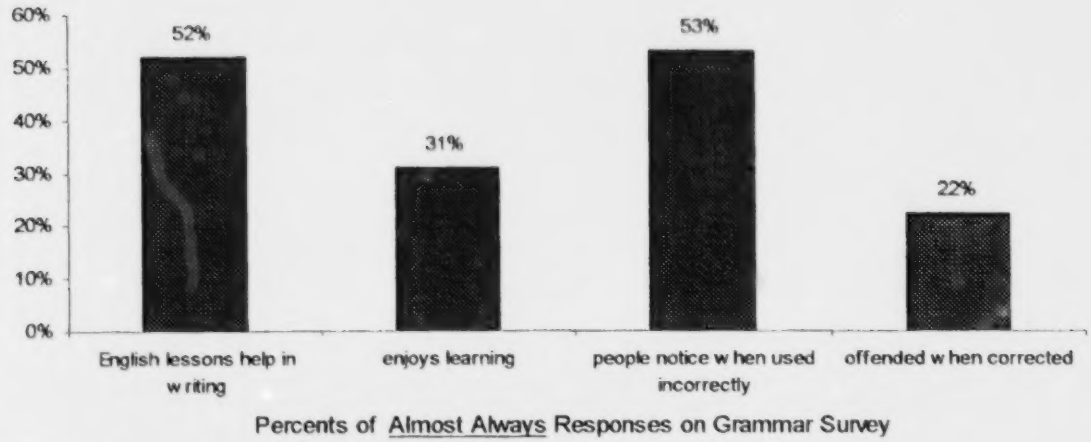

Figure 5. Student Survey of Grammar Skills

Over 52% of the students believed English lessons helped in daily writing, but only 31% actually enjoyed learning grammar skills. This was reinforced in the pretest reflections. The majority professed they found grammar to be boring and confusing. So while students perceived grammar lessons as being important, they did not necessarily enjoy the lessons.

Finally, 53% of the students responded that they thought people noticed when incorrect grammar was used, and only 22% of the students were offended when someone corrected their oral, incorrect grammar. This supports the observation that students perceive correct grammar as important and want to use it in their daily lives.

Probable Causes

Most recent results of mandatory achievement tests show students perform at average or above in grammar usage. Site A students scored in the 72 percentile; Site B students scored in the 50.3 percentile; Site C students scored in the 59.6 percentile; and Site D students scored in the 59.7 percentile. The national percentile average is 50. Therefore, while the average scores on achievement tests are not alarming, the negative attitude toward grammar and the use of incorrect grammar in their daily tasks does not support these test findings. Teachers

from all four sites, in informal interviews and survey comments, indicated similar concerns about student attitude and daily use of correct grammar.

The examination of the literature pertaining to the students' difficulty in transferring grammar skills taught to daily writing tasks and the negative feelings exhibited by students toward grammar instruction reveals several causes. While teachers often perceive grammar instruction as important, many teachers do not think that grammar is important enough to be taught throughout the curriculum. Therefore, teachers may not always treat grammar with emphasis and enthusiasm, and students perceive this immediately (Brown, 1996). Most teachers continue to teach grammar the way it was taught to them, and more people need to be involved and aware that there are different approaches and better methods available to make it more meaningful and effective for students today (Vavra, 1993).

Many students have a poor attitude toward grammar instruction, causing a lack of confidence in usage and writing. Some of a student's lack of confidence may be in response to the red-marking of every mistake without taking into consideration the weight of the mistake. Without an explanation of how to improve through conferencing with peers or teachers, what may be only the need to proofread better may be presumed by the student to be a much more serious situation. The student may be at the stage where they are capable of learning a missing concept, but the student may see "red" and feel like a miserable failure. In order to avoid criticism, the student's readiness to attempt more complex writing is squelched and the writing reverts to simpler, more child-like writing (Murdick, 1996).

While published textbooks make grammar seem so simple, students are presumed to be able to learn the complex and many irregular English grammatical concepts in one or two lessons (Murdick, 1996). The textbook's introduction and focus on a concept for a short time

may be a cause of lack of true understanding and possible transference of grammar skills to daily written and oral work.

Some textbooks rely on boring, repetitive, and rote drills to pound the concept into the student's memory. Such drill work is dull, dismal and dreadful for the teachers (Brown, 1997). The students, consciously or unconsciously, internalize the teacher's attitude and reflect that attitude back. Drills to promote memorization of grammar rules are viewed as acceptable if they are designed to make the students think versus to get the mechanical response from the students (Larsen-Freeman, 1995). Whereas current researchers believe that literature and model writings are more pertinent sources of lesson instruction than the textbook fundamentals of grammar, most teachers, parents and administrations still regard the textbook fundamentals as an evil necessity in order to learn the very foundation of the writer's craft. (Brown, 1997).

For many students, including those whose first language is not Standard American English (SAE), at home or with friends, this "evil necessity" seems unimportant. What is important to the students is that their peers understand them (Brown, 1997). For these students, the textbook grammar instruction is complicated, cumbersome, and illogical and the students see it as meaningless, dehumanizing, and drudgery (Yoder, 1996). For them, the act of diagramming sentences has no connection to their home situations. This is the cause of negative impressions toward grammar instruction just when their need to communicate effectively with words in writing and orally is in high gear (Brown, 1996).

Other causes of the students' difficulty in transferring grammar skills to their daily writing tasks and the negative feelings toward grammar instruction may stem from ineffective teaching methods and poor curriculum. Even though research has shown that students have

difficulty applying their knowledge of grammatical terms, ways to improve students grasp of grammar and its application has been largely neglected by researchers (Hillocks & Smith, 1991). Most of the traditional teaching of grammar of definition, example and drill has proven to be ineffective (Schuster, 1999) and has not significantly influenced growth in reading and writing. There is overwhelming evidence that the behaviorist theory, "practice makes perfect," and skills practiced in isolation will be learned and applied as relevant is constantly being proven to be untrue (Weaver, 1996).

One cause of the collapse of grammar among students and teachers is the limited and prescriptive idea of grammar as rules to follow and errors to avoid rather than the more holistic view of seeing grammar as the study of language with underlying principles and patterns that make language work (Einarsson, 1999). Instead of teaching grammar as simply obeying a set of rules, it needs to be connected to writing. Ignorance of natural syntactic development permeates our English curriculum as traditional grammar has focused too much on error and not enough on normal sentence structure (Vavra, 1993). As Kalkavage (1998) states, "The trouble with grammar is we teach the letter, but not the spirit, the rules, but not the point. We tell students what not to do, but we do not often enough help them identify and examine the glories of syntax in great essays, speeches, novels and poems" (p. 61). Syntactic awareness instruction should play a supportive role, not dominant role in teaching writing and reading. Too much time is being spent on grammar exercises and not enough on learning language functions and strategies. Classroom time should include literacy skill through reading, writing, challenging texts, literature and music (Barnitz, 1998). The error-based handbooks used to teach grammar today are short on explanation, reasoning, and the questioning of why behind the topics. Grammar should be taught with a textbook approach to

be treated like other fully developed school subjects (chemistry, math), which involves unique cognitive skills, concepts and interconnected ideas (Einarsson, 1999).

Another factor that has impacted low student achievement scores in language arts is that teachers are not addressing students' various learning styles (Geimer, Getz, Pochert, & Pullam, 2000). Most students perceive lessons of structure as boring and a collection of arbitrary rules and even many teachers claim they do not know enough about the rules to teach grammar (Larsen-Freeman, 1995). Teachers seem to cling to traditional grammar approaches because they have not developed alternative approaches (Hillocks & Smith, 1991). While some intensive grammar study is necessary, the learning of grammatical concepts is a complex process, and there is no quick fix. Students need to gain an awareness of correctness and confidence in their use of the English language. The issues of grammar skill transference to writing and the negative feelings of the students toward grammar instruction have initiated this action research in our classes.

CHAPTER 3

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Literature Review

During the Middle Ages, grammar was considered the foundation of all knowledge. It was thought to be a necessity in order to understand philosophy, theology and literature (Weaver, 1996). Grammatical studies in the classical languages, such as Latin, had traditionally emphasized the learning of rules and their use of practical application (Applebee, 1974). What is known as traditional school grammar evolved from this early beginning. Since the 1950's, a more modern style of grammar has had some influence on instruction, but the belief that grammar instruction is unsatisfactory and ineffective still prevails.

Today's problems with grammar education may stem from the negative feelings and attitudes toward grammar usage and instruction in the classrooms. In addition, it seems that schools do not put very much emphasis on grammar. Some instructors feel that grammar is not that important (Brown, 1996). Many instructors have experienced frustrations because they feel that many of the rules of grammar are a waste of time.

Some instructors find that the teaching of grammar is "dull, dismal, and dreadful" (Brown, 1996). Many teachers do not think that grammar is important enough to be taught throughout the curriculum. It is thought that the teaching of grammar does not serve any

practical purpose for most students (Weaver, 1996). Therefore, teachers may not always teach grammar with enthusiasm, and the students perceive this immediately (Brown, 1996). This may make the students feel as if their grammar classes are repetitive and boring, which in turn makes them lose focus.

Grammar is still being taught in some schools in traditional ways. While other subjects have changed in the last 50 years, grammar is still basically taught the same way (Brown, 1996). Part of the reason that grammar is taught in a traditional way is because teachers are not offered enough opportunities to take workshops on grammar instruction. "The English profession, and especially its gatekeepers, has generally had a closed mind about grammar. As a result, it has been extremely difficult to develop and share alternative approaches to teaching it" (Varva, 1993, p. 81). Most teachers continue to teach grammar the way it was taught to them, and this may not be the best method in today's classrooms. Different approaches and better methods are available to help motivate effective grammar teaching. However, more people need to be involved in the process (Varva, 1993). Instructors need to present grammar in a way that makes it more meaningful for students.

Some of the negative attitudes that students have about grammar begin with the diagramming of sentences. Students feel that this outlining technique is irrelevant to the real world (Brown, 1996). Students need to understand the need to study grammar. If they realize how important grammar is in the real world, then they may be more eager to study it. The reasons for studying grammar include: understanding how people and language function, helping to understand language variation and change, discerning differences in language between different social and cultural groups, describing developmental stages in language, and making generalizations about how people learn languages (Tchudi and Thomas, 1996).

Increasingly, educators are presented with a heterogeneous student body including those for whom English is a secondary language. In varied social environments, the standard American English is not considered to be a necessary skill and thus meaningless to the student's life. This is all the more reason for educators to find a means to help students bridge the gap between home language and standard American English in order to clearly communicate their ideas orally and in writing (Yoder, 1996). This has not been accomplished using homogenous instruction. Grammar instruction is a vital component to teaching the "...heart of the educational enterprise" (Lynn, 1993, p. 69). Numerous ways have been conceived to make students' learning less complex. As students examine the varied dialects and languages they encounter through friends, sports, regional dialects, and media, they notice that language is a by-product of customs and traditions (Tchudi and Tchudi, 1991). Through further examination, students "note that English relies heavily on word order to get its meaning across" (Yoder, 1996, p.85). Students also need to be made aware that using incorrect grammar in their written applications and oral communications with potential employers can be a determining factor in their job search success (Cotton, 1988). As early as the elementary level, children need to listen to what they say and write, not only to their word choice, but also the message and the tone they wish to convey. Then, as they begin to record their thoughts, they will discover the importance of details in communication. Steven Pinker (1997) noted that in any given standard sentence of twenty words or less, a person has a choice of creating ten words for each position. This yields the possibility of creating 10 to the 20^{th} power grammatically correct and sensible sentence. The vast number of distinct thoughts can thus be expressed in a hundred million trillion different ways. These are powerful reasons

for learning to manipulate the language in order to influence their world (Duckart, 1995; Kalkavage, 1998).

Grammar instruction needs to be brought out of the isolation chamber of daily oral language, worksheets, and products completed in one sitting. It needs to be connected to the children's personal lives and the literature they read. From personal language experiences, students discover the evolving process of expressing their feelings and the power those words can evoke if attention is paid to vocabulary, word order, and sentence structure through a variety of genres (Kane, 1997). In order to make this journey less complex and more meaningful, Ediger (1998) suggested students need to move from the concrete concepts (noun object) to the semiconcrete (photo of noun) to the abstract (noun word). Mini-lessons or grammar mechanics can evolve from their personal writings or from an awareness of the mechanics used in a text or piece of literature. Examples from their stories or from literature can be shown on overheads for class discussions. Using sentences collected from literature provide opportunities for students to "...revel in the sentences that our favorite authors have given to us" (Kane, 1997, p. 72). Time also needs to be afforded for "chat backs." This can be in the form of journaling or individual discussions with the children. Students need more active participation and "dialogue" in evaluation processes of grammatical products. Student work should serve as models of positive qualities, descriptions of strengths and weaknesses and specific prescriptions for improvements rather than just pointing out errors and making corrections (Blake, 1996). Offering feedback provides the teacher with insight into the student's thinking and provides the student with a reasoned explanation, some guidance, or affirmation of their risk-taking product. Chat backs also promote writing as a process through which words get manipulated, turned around, or thrown out in order to convey the writer's

thoughts most powerfully to the reader (Blake, 1996). Streed (1993) noted that while people can drive a car without knowing what is under the hood, it is nice to know what the components are and how they operate if something does not sound quite right. The same is true of communication. People can talk and write using words, but if they understand how the language components work, they will discover the possibilities for expressing themselves in original ways as great authors have. Through the implementation of a systematic, holistic approach to grammar instruction, perhaps students will no longer classify grammar instruction as "...somewhere below cleaning toilets" (Yoder, 1996, p. 83).

Though there has been much debate over the years as to whether or not the grammar of language should be taught, the point may be not whether grammar should be taught, but how it should be taught (Menyuk, 1995). For grammar instruction to survive in today's classroom, a systematic, holistic approach to teaching grammar is necessary. This approach would explain the grammar concepts in an orderly fashion that would allow for new skills to be built upon previously mastered ones. These skills need to be developed as cognitive strategies and concepts that are interconnected ideas, not just dictatorial rules to be memorized (Einarsson, 1999). This approach combines traditional textbook methods with a more creative, activity-based classroom. Effective teachers need to integrate approaches and strategies as they build on what students already know, extend students' skills and knowledge, and encourage inquiry, problem solving, self-monitoring, and independent thinking (Routman, 2000).

A systematic, holistic approach to teaching grammar is founded on grammar concepts and capitalizes on an activity-based classroom. Usage and mechanics must be taught in gentle, encouraging, nontechnical, innovative ways (Schuster, 1999). Teachers should use traditional textbooks to determine the curriculum and then apply cooperative learning and

multiple intelligence activities when teaching the grammar concepts. It is a belief that working cooperatively with others in the educational setting may directly affect the students learning and self-efficacy (Grant, 1998).

Gardner (1991) concluded students learn according to their learning preferences, and activities implemented in the classroom should involve all intelligences so that everyone has an equal opportunity to learn. The seven intelligences Gardner (1991), defines are: 1) logical/mathematical - consists of the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically; 2) linguistic - involves a mastery of language and the ability to effectively manipulate language to express oneself; 3) spatial - gives one the ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems; 4) musical - encompasses the ability to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones and rhythms; 5) bodily/kinesthetic - the ability to use one's mental abilities to coordinate one's own bodily movements; 6) interpersonal - the ability to understand and discern the feelings and intentions of others and ; 7) intrapersonal - the ability to understand one's own feelings and motivations. Since all seven intelligences are needed to productively function in society, teachers should think of all intelligences as equally important. Therefore, teachers should structure the presentation of material in a style, which engages most, or all of the intelligences. By activating a wide assortment of intelligences, teaching in this way can facilitate a deeper understanding of the subject material (Brualdi, 1996).

One method of grammar instruction that attempts to engage most, if not all, of the intelligences is the Shurley Method. Through the use of jingles and repetitive patterns, students are constantly exposed to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities that meet their individual learning needs. The students are also taught systematically how all the parts of a

sentence fit and work together and to think cognitively using higher-order thinking skills to solve difficult language problems (Shurley, Wetsell and Raines, 1987). The Shurley Method provides the basic tools for writing and gives the concepts and vocabulary necessary to see writing as a process (Sprenger, 1999).

A similar method is Sentence Sense: The Hunter Writing System that teaches grammar using specific cognitive strategies. The students learn the different parts of speech and their relationships in a well-structured sentence using mnemonic devices (Hunter, 1996). Key elements of morphology or syntax are set in place by structured, concentrated, repetitive activities (McCarthy, 1994). Using numerous and different memory aids, such as mnemonic devices, are useful in learning and remembering (Brown, 1977). Both the Shurley Method and Hunter System use these devices effectively. Also, both methods employ the skills taught to build on each other and reinforce concepts previously mastered.

Whatever approach is used to teach grammar, it is widely believed that an integrated language arts that respects the interrelationship of the language processes - reading, writing, speaking and listening - is an integral part of meaningful teaching. Conventions are essential, but writers learn to control conventions best when needed in the context of real writing. Conventions could be taught in interactive minilessons in procedures, craft, and conventions that help move students' writing forward (Routman, 2000). Minilessons help teach and reinforce grammar usage and conventions. Educators hope students will experience less anxiety as they move from seeing rules as limiting to seeing rules as possibilities (Kalkavage, 1998). If students are taught how all parts of a sentence fit together, they have a clear picture of how to write complete sentences and merge this strong skill foundation with the writing process (Shurley, Wetsell, and Raines, 1987). "Everything done in writing is an act of

convention" (Graves, 1995, p. 39). The mechanics of grammar are but the tools to be used in the creative process of communicating (Walsh, 1991). If students possess appropriate knowledge and linguistic awareness, they are able to use this syntactic information to predict and construct meaning and are able to keep the literary process whole (Barnitz, 1998). The literary process becomes evident in student writing.

Studies are beginning to show how a heightened awareness of language can indeed improve student writing. Students are responding eagerly to the growing awareness of their language abilities (Einearsson, 1999). By using systematic, holistic strategies to teach grammar, students are able to experience correct grammar usage, internalize the system of structure, and finally, utilize their knowledge when composing their own written work. Competence and confidence exhibited by students in their writing demonstrates they truly understand the components of grammar (Hunter, 1996).

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of using a holistic, systematic approach to grammar instruction that makes the material meaningful and less complex to the students during the period of September 2001 to January 2002, the targeted second, fourth, and eighth-grade students will increase their level of competence in using correct grammar in written and oral activities, as measured by teacher-created checklists of students' weekly writing samples across the curriculum and periodic testing of the students' understanding of sentence construction using the Shurley Method materials.

As a result of using effective teaching strategies that are activity based and include the multiple intelligences, during the period of September 2001 to January 2002, the targeted second, fourth, and eighth-grade students will enjoy the study of grammar as they develop a

heightened awareness of the importance of using correct grammar across the curriculum and in their daily lives as measured by teacher-created surveys and students' responses to questions on the Shurley Method pretest and posttest.

To accomplish the project objectives, the following processes are necessary:

1. Shurley Method materials will be obtained.
2. Surveys will assess the attitudes of students, parents, and teachers toward grammar instruction and their success with grammar usage before and after the intervention.
3. A checklist for assessing the students' progress in targeted skills will be developed.
4. Posters of grammar patterns, if not purchased, will need to be created.
5. Transparencies of sample sentences, if not purchased, will need to be created.
6. Teachers will need to model the varied activities, with enthusiasm, in preparation for the students' future role as "teacher."
7. Ample time will need to be provided for meaningful interaction with grammar usage in written products.

Project Action Plan

The following week-by-week action plan will be carried out with the targeted second, fourth, and eighth-grade students. Prior to implementing our intervention, we will secure or create all the necessary teaching materials. Students will have individual writing journals. At back-to-school night, we will discuss the goal of our project and distribute the necessary consent forms and the parental survey. The parental survey will serve as a window into their child's abilities and needs, as well as the parents' attitudes toward grammar. During the first two weeks of school, the student and teacher surveys, regarding their attitudes toward grammar instruction and usage, will be completed and returned. This intervention will be

carried out over an eighteen-week period, beginning in September 2001 and concluding in January 2002. Once all parental permission slips have been returned to the researchers, the participating students will be given a pretest. The pretest will provide the researchers with an understanding of how much the students know about grammar and their attitude concerning the English language. Over the studied period, the children will be introduced to new concepts as they master others. Opportunities will be provided across the curriculum to construct their own sentences using learned concepts in the writing of paragraphs. The Shurley Method incorporates Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences in their exploration of English usage. These intelligences include verbal, logical, musical, naturalist, visual, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Their confidence and understanding of the English language will be fostered through meaningful, activity-based activities. Random samples of the students' writings will be collected on a weekly basis for documenting growth in targeted grammar skills. At the conclusion, the students will be given a posttest to assess the effectiveness of this program in improving their understanding of sentence structure and the quality of their writing skills. The students will also take a survey to express their attitude about their interaction with the English language after instruction that considered the varied learning styles of the students. Parents will also be asked to complete a survey that will be used to compare their assessment of their child's grammar usage before and after the intervention.

Week 1:

- Distribute consent forms and surveys to students, parents, and teachers.
- Students take the Shurley Method pretest that includes a writing sample.
- Students are introduced to the teaching posters and journals.

- Plan long and short-term goals for study skills.
- Distribute the Shurley Method student materials.

Week 2:

- Students are introduced to the sentence concept and its jingle.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 3:

- Concept learning of sentence structure will be continued.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 4:

- Students are introduced to the noun and verb sentence flow and subsequent jingles.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 5:

- Concept learning of noun and verb sentence flow will continue.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 6:

- Students are introduced to the adjective and adverb concepts and their jingles.
- Adjectives and adverbs are added to sentence flow activities.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 7:

- Concept learning of adjectives and adverbs will continue with attention to its place in the sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 8:

- Students are introduced to the article adjective concept and its jingle.
- Article adjectives are added to the sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 9:

- Concepts of subjects and predicates will be added to the sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 10:

- Previously introduced concepts are reviewed for understanding.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 11:

- Students are introduced to the concept of prepositions and its jingle.
- Prepositional phrases are added to the sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 12:

- Concept of prepositional phrases will be continued.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 13:

- Students will be introduced to the concept of pronouns and its jingle.
- Pronouns are added to the sentence flow.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.

- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 14:

- Concept learning of pronouns will continue.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use this concept in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 15:

- Students will be introduced to conjunctions and interjections.
- Conjunctions and interjections will be added to the sentence flow.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 16:

- Lessons will be devoted to breaking down learned parts of speech into their more complex parts.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 17:

- Students will continue to study the complexities of learned parts of speech.
- Improved sentences are designed for additional sentence flow.
- Students are expected to use these concepts in their own writing across the curriculum.
- A random sample of their writing will be assessed for growth in the targeted grammar skill, using the checklist.

Week 18:

- Students will take a posttest and complete a survey assessing their understanding of grammar and their attitude toward grammar instruction and usage.
- Parents will complete a survey providing their input on their child's development in grammar usage and attitude, as well as their personal attitude toward grammar instruction.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, a pretest and posttest covering the content and skills identified in our grammar program will be given. Samples of student writing will be kept throughout the intervention. Checklists and test assessments will be included in the assessment process. The parents and students will complete surveys at the beginning and conclusion of the intervention.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objectives of this project were to increase student competence and confidence in using correct grammar in written and verbal activities, as well as to provide a means through which students would gain a positive attitude toward grammar instruction and usage. In order to achieve these objectives, the researchers chose an instructional intervention that incorporated the multiple intelligences in the exploration of English language usage. Evidence of growth over the 18 week period was documented from preintervention and postintervention student and parent surveys, authentic assessments of students' informal and formal writing artifacts across the curriculum using weekly checklists and journals, and preintervention and postintervention assessments of studied skills including a written response in paragraph form.

Prior to beginning the research, parental consent was given and parental attitude surveys were completed (Appendices A and B). No students in the research classes were eliminated from participation, and parents noted their enthusiasm for the

intervention. While the researchers conducted this research in varied grade levels and sites, the same student, parent, and teacher surveys were used as measures.

During the first two weeks of research, the student and teacher surveys detailing their attitudes and beliefs were completed and collected for analysis (Appendices D and F). The students' knowledge of grammar skills was assessed using the Shurley Method pretest (Appendix G) that included a written paragraph on "What I Think About English." Students were also introduced to the teaching posters, student materials, and journals. Finally, discussions regarding study skills were conducted in grade appropriate detail.

Teacher surveys were uniform and used as evidence of the need for this study. The purpose of teacher survey was two-fold. The researchers wanted to become aware of the importance the respective schools' teaching staff placed on grammar instruction and implementation. Additionally, it was hoped that through reflecting on the survey questions, the subjects would gain a greater self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in promoting proper grammar skills across the curriculum. The optional comments section provided the researchers a clarification of the teachers' answers to the questions and a deeper understanding of the teachers' attitudes. Regardless of the grade level taught, teachers noted students' inability to consistently write in complete sentences. This mimicked the students' oral communication in which responses to questions typically were sentence fragments beginning with because. Since the purpose of the teacher survey was to ascertain how consistently grammar skills were being reinforced throughout the research sites, it was only investigated in the preintervention period.

Beginning with Week 2 and continuing until Week 17, the students were introduced to grammar concepts, the grammar jingles, and assessed on successful application of those concepts in writing. The researchers deviated in the time frame of content presentation. The time frame deviations were due to the range of required grade appropriate language skills to meet state standards from second to eighth grade and the necessity to spend more time on some concepts for an in depth understanding and transference across the curriculum. Weekly assessment of writing skills was based on three randomly selected sentences from each writing artifact. The analysis of collected data reflected students increased use of proper and more complex sentence structures. This was demonstrated in the students' daily writing and monitored with the aid of checklists (Appendix H) and researcher kept journals (Appendix I).

During the eighteenth week, the students completed a researcher created posttest to assess their understanding of taught grammar skills. While the preintervention and postintervention formal assessments varied by grade level, their format, number of questions, and skills covered remained the same (Appendices J, K and L). For the purposes of determining evidence of transference, the researchers constructed their own postintervention assessment documents using similarly patterned sentences, questions, skills, and knowledge of the English language. In their postintervention survey, the students were questioned to ascertain if there had been any adjustments in their attitude toward grammar instruction and usage (Appendix D). The written paragraph on "What I Think About English," remained the same to assess attitude changes before and after the intervention.

Parents were again contacted in Week 18 through a postsurvey for input on their child's growth in usage of proper grammar in verbal and written communications. The parental postintervention survey covered only three preintervention survey questions dealing with their child's grammar skills (See Appendix M). While the parent attitudes and views were important considerations in implementing this program, the researchers focused on information concerning student growth in skills in the postintervention survey for the analysis of the effectiveness of the intervention.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Figure 6 indicates the effects of the intervention grammar program on the students' success with transfer of knowledge to written and verbal communication in their daily lives according to parents' opinions. A postintervention survey was given to the parents using three of the questions from the preintervention survey.

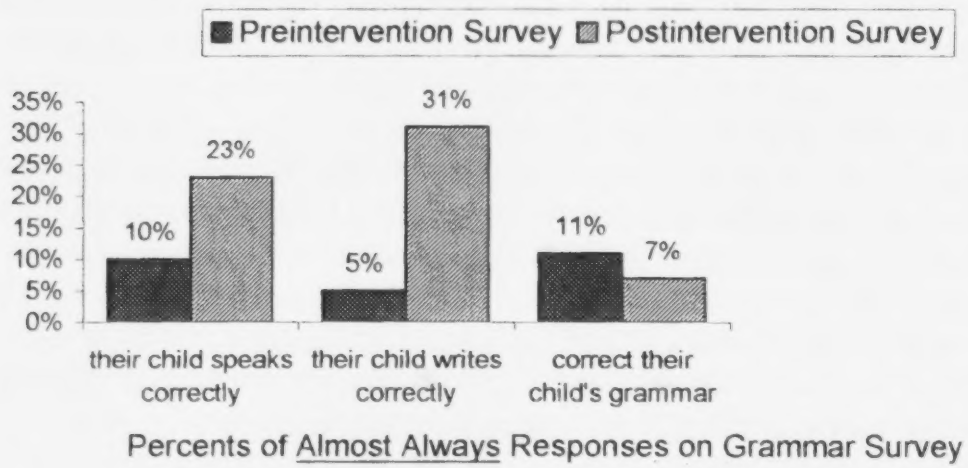

Figure 6. Parent Pre- and Postsurveys in Which Parents Shared Their Perceptions of Their Student's Grammar in Speaking, Writing, and the Need to Correct Their Student's Grammar.

The parent pre- and postsurvey of Figure 6 also indicates the percentage of students almost always speaking correctly more than doubled from 10% to 23%. The percentage of parents reporting improvement in students' writing jumped dramatically from 5% to 30%. Meanwhile, the percentage of parents almost always correcting their children's grammar had decreased from 11% to 6%; the need to correct their child's grammar may have diminished.

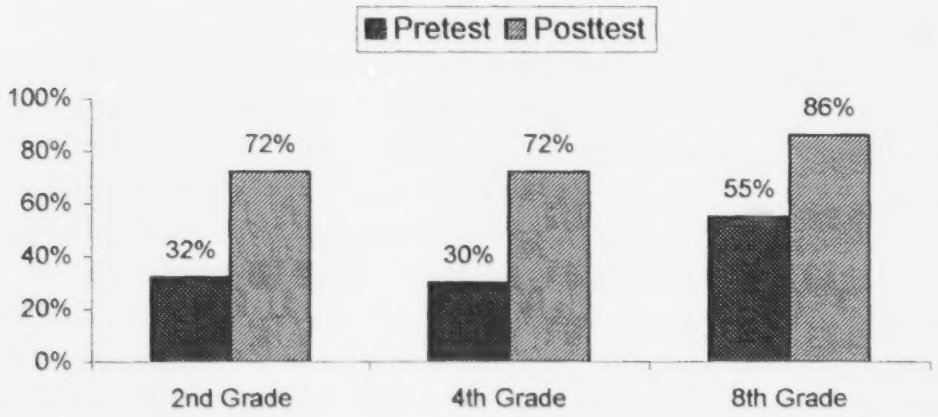

Figure 7. Student Pre- and Posttest Comparison of Students' Understanding of Grammar Usage and the Ability to Apply Grammar Conventions

Figure 7 compares the average class percentages on the pretests and the posttests on a scale of 100%. Prior to intervention, the class average on the pretest in 2nd grade was 32%, and on the postintervention test, the students increased the average to 72%. In 4th grade the pretest averaged 30%, and the posttest showed a significant increase to 72%. The 8th grade pretest scores averaged 55% and increased to 86% on the posttest. No individual student scores decreased, and most students made substantial progress in understanding and applying grammar skills.

Paragraphs written in the pretest alluded to students' lack of confidence and enthusiasm with regard to grammar instruction. The posttest paragraphs indicated the students had more positive attitudes. A variety of student comments on the posttest included, "English has helped me a lot since the beginning of the year. . . . I didn't know very much until we started the Shurley Method. . . . It has helped me a ton." Another comment was, "I like English because it helped me in language. When I started 4th grade, I stunk in language. Then we started the Shurley Method, and my grades went sky high!" These are just a few samples of the postintervention comments.

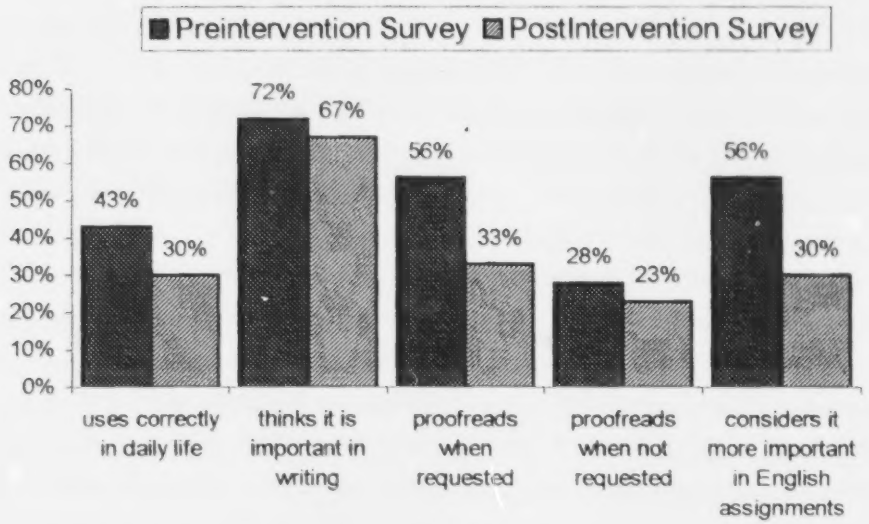

Figure 8. Student Pre- and Postsurveys in Which Students Shared Their Thoughts Regarding the Importance of Correct Grammar Usage in Daily Life, in Writing, in All Subjects, and the Need to Proofread

The results of Figure 8 indicate that the students believed they were using correct grammar less often in daily communication as the percentages declined from

43% in the presurvey to 30% in the postsurvey. The survey results also indicated a downward turn in proofreading when requested by individual students from 56% to 33%, as compared to the small difference of 28% (presurvey) to 23% (postsurvey) in proofreading their written work when not requested. However, the students continued to assess proper grammar as important in writing as there was little difference between the 72% and 67% in the pre- and postsurveys respectively. The largest decline of 56% to 30% from the pretest to the posttest was in the perception of the students thinking that using correct grammar in English assignments was more important than in other subjects. Personal comments from the students reported that it was important to transfer correct grammar skills across the curriculum. Perhaps the results indicate students' heightened awareness of their responsibility in using correct grammar.

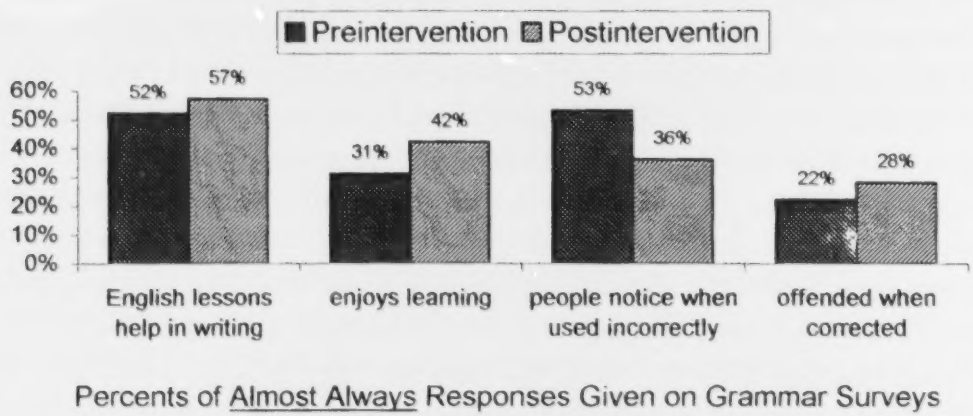

Figure 9. Student Pre- and Postsurveys in Which Students Addressed Their Reactions to Using and Learning English, and Students' Awareness When Grammar is Used Incorrectly

In Figure 9, there was a small increase of 52% in the presurvey to 57% in the postsurvey as students indicated that English lessons have helped in their writing.

Their enjoyment in learning English had a larger increase from 31% (presurvey) to 42% (postsurvey). There was also an increase of 22% to 28% in the pre- and postsurveys respectively of the students noting that they are offended when their grammar usage is corrected. The results repeatedly indicate that students have an increased appreciation for the complexities of the English language. However, in the presurvey, 53% of the students believed people noticed when they used grammar incorrectly, and only 36% indicated that to be the case in the postsurvey. This result may be influenced by the fact that the students are using correct grammar more consistently, as reported by their parents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data collected, student achievement in grammar improved as documented in the comparison of pretests and posttests. A few factors should be considered when evaluating these results. First, the eighth grade class was familiar with the terminology and format of the pretest because of prior experience with the intervention tool. The other three classes had no prior experience with the intervention tool. Also, both the pretest and posttest covered the same skills according to grade level, but the teachers, according to grade level needs, individually designed the pretests and posttests.

Although some students still disliked grammar instruction after the intervention, the overall attitude of the students improved with many indicating an understanding of the importance of correct grammar usage. The decline in the postsurvey percentages regarding using correct grammar in daily communication and proofreading may have been due to the students' increased awareness of proper

grammar in oral and written communication. Parent surveys indicated they felt correct grammar usage was important and acknowledged a noticeable improvement in their children's grammar after the intervention.

With minor variations, the interventions were put into effect. The variations were based on the grade levels and student needs. The older classes were able to move quicker through some skills because of review and increased levels of mastery; whereas, the younger students were being introduced to new skills and required more practice and time. In concurrence with that observation, researchers found continuity difficult with new students moving in after the intervention had begun. Researchers also noted that as sentences became more complex, transference of skills became more difficult.

The researchers contend the continuous, spiral learning incorporated in the Shurley Method increased student achievement. The Shurley Method also utilizes the multiple intelligences, which may have positively impacted the increased confidence, enthusiasm, attitude, and awareness of the students with regard to grammar usage. Because of the systematic format of the Shurley Method, the researchers conducting this study would endorse its use for second through fifth grade with training for second through eighth grade instructors so that a solid foundation is created and reinforced consistently throughout the school. The researchers feel sentence structures in the upper grades become too complex for the sentence patterns in the Shurley Method program. However, the instructors in sixth through eighth grade need the background knowledge of terminology and concepts implemented in the Shurley Method for review and supplementation in these upper grades. The researchers have

found that the Shurley Method takes the parts of speech and in a systematic approach teaches grammar concepts. In personal comments, the second and fourth grade students noted they enjoyed the music, rhythm and movement involved in the concept jingles. Through the jingles and other classroom activities, the students are actively involved in the learning of correct grammar usage and internalize the learning by developing their cognitive skills in problem solving and transference. This helps create a heightened level of grammar awareness, which leads to better student writers and speakers. It is impossible to know if the children would have shown the same degree of growth without the addition of this program to their curriculum, but it appears the seeds of grammatical growth have taken root in their daily lives.

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Appendix A
Parental Letter of Consent

Saint Xavier University
Student Consent for Student to Participate in a Research Study
Grammar Instruction

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am currently enrolled in a master's degree program at Saint Xavier University. This program requires me to design and implement a project on an issue that directly affects my instruction. I have chosen to examine grammar instruction.

The purpose of this project is to improve your student's confidence and use of grammar in their daily lives. It is my desire to help your student's academic performance.

I will be conducting my project from September 2001 through January 2002. The activities related to the project will take place during regular instructional delivery. The gathering of information for my project during these activities offers no risks of any kind to your child.

Your permission allows me to include your student in the reporting of information for my project. All information gathered will be kept completely confidential, and information included in the project report will be grouped so that no individual can be identified. The report will be used to share what I have learned as a result of this project with other professionals in the field of education.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and withdrawal may be requested at any time. If you choose not to participate, information gathered about your student will not be included in this report.

If you agree to have your student participate in the project, please fill in and sign the attached statement and survey and return them to me by September 7th.

If you have any questions or would like further information about my project, please contact me at 672-6561.

Sincerely,

Appendix B
Parent Presurvey

Grammar Survey: Parents

For the purpose of this study, the definition of grammar includes using correct: punctuation, grammar usage, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, and capitalization.

Use this scale to answer the following questions. Circle the number that expresses your feelings most accurately.

5-almost always 4-often 3-sometimes 2-rarely 1-unsure

1. Did you enjoy the study of grammar as a student?
   5 4 3 2 1

2. Do you feel using correct grammar is important in your daily communications?
   5 4 3 2 1

3. Do you feel your student uses correct grammar when speaking?
   5 4 3 2 1

4. Do you feel your student uses correct grammar when writing?
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Do you find yourself correcting your child's grammar?
   5 4 3 2 1

6. Do you feel grammar skills should be expected in all subject areas?
   5 4 3 2 1

7. How often do you believe your child should use correct grammar?
   5 4 3 2 1

Comments (optional): Please feel free to add any concerns, questions, or comments that you may have regarding grammar instruction. Thank you!

Saint Xavier University
Parent Consent for Student to Participate in a Research Study
Grammar Instruction

I, _____, the parent/legal guardian of the minor named below, acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my student's participation. I freely and voluntarily consent to my student's participation in this project. I understand all information gathered during this project will be completely confidential. I also understand that I may keep a copy of this consent form for my own information.

Student's name_____

_____

Signature Parent/ Legal Guardian Date

Saint Xavier University
Student Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Grammar Instruction

I, _____, acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my participation. I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in this project. I understand all information gathered during this project will be completely confidential. I also understand that I may keep a copy of this consent form for my own information.

_____

Signature of Participant Date

Please return by: September 7, 2001

Appendix D
Student Pre- and Postsurvey

Grammar Survey: Student

Use this scale to answer the following questions:

5-almost always 4-often 3-sometimes 2-rarely 1-unsure

1. How often do you use correct grammar in your daily communications?
   5 4 3 2 1

2. Do you think it is important to use proper grammar when you write?
   5 4 3 2 1

3. When given an English assignment, do you worry about it being grammatically correct? 5 4 3 2 1

4. Do you think your English lessons help you in your daily writing?
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Do you proofread your sentences for correct grammar when teacher requested?
   5 4 3 2 1

6. Do you proofread your sentences for correct grammar when not specifically requested? 5 4 3 2 1

7. Do you think people notice when you use incorrect grammar?
   5 4 3 2 1

8. Are you offended when you speak and someone corrects your grammar?
   5 4 3 2 1

9. Do you enjoy learning grammar skills?
   5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

Appendix E
Teacher Letter from Researchers

August 20, 2001

Dear Colleague,

I am currently enrolled in a master's degree program at Saint Xavier University. This program requires me to design and implement a project on an issue that directly affects my instruction. I have chosen to examine grammar instruction.

The purpose of this project is to improve student confidence and grammar usage in their daily lives. I will be conducting my project from September 2001 through January 2002. I will need your assistance in filling out a teacher survey which will be used to gain an awareness of teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of grammar skills across the curriculum.

Please return these surveys to me by September 7, 2001 (since I know you have so much extra time on your hands right now.)

Thank you for your time!

Appendix F
Teacher Survey

Grammar Survey: Teachers

For the purpose of this study, the definition of grammar includes using correct: punctuation, grammar usage, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, and capitalization.

Use this scale to answer the following questions:

5-almost always 4-often 3-sometimes 2-rarely 1-unsure

1. Do you teach grammar skills in subjects other than language?
   5 4 3 2 1

2. Do you promote correct grammar in students' oral responses?
   5 4 3 2 1

3. Do you consider grammar skills in your grading?
   5 4 3 2 1

4. Do you see evidence of students transferring grade appropriate grammar skills to written work across the curriculum?
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Do you feel that you have the background knowledge necessary to teach grammar effectively within your subject area?
   5 4 3 2 1

6. How often do you require your students to write responses in complete sentences?
   5 4 3 2 1

Comments (optional):

Appendix G
Shurley Method Pretests were text published

Appendix H
Researchers' Weekly Checklist

Name:
Number:
Date:

Targeted Skill: _____

Number of sentences evaluated: _____

Students	3 sentences correct	2 sentences correct	1 sentence correct	No sentences correct
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				

Week of

_____

Actions Taken:

Reflection:

PLUSES (+)	MINUSES (-)	INTERESTING (?)

Tell how each word is used in the sentences by writing the part of speech above the word.

Label: Subject Noun (**SN**), Verb (**V**), Adjective (**Adj**), Adverb (**Adv**), Article Adjective (**A**), Preposition (**PP**), Object of the Preposition (**OP**), Pronoun (**P**)

1. The five little puppies jumped into the water yesterday.

2. I giggled at my friend's funny jokes.

3. The wind blew strongly at the beach.

4. To find the Adjectives, I ask: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

5. To find the Adverbs, I ask: _ _ _, _ _ _ _, _ _ _ _ _.

Put capital letters and punctuation marks in the sentences below.

7. i live at 126 oak street in peoria illinois

8. my birthday is on february 9 2002

9. aunt carol and uncle tom like to ride bikes on the rock island trail

Write **S** if it is a sentence or **F** if it is a sentence fragment on the line.

_____ Mr. Jones visited our school. ____ The dog in the yard.

_____ Grew in the garden this year. ____ We played all day.

Write **S** for a singular noun or **P** for a plural noun.

desk _____ cats _____

shoes _____ forest _____

pencils _____ lunch _____

Underline the complete subject once and the complete predicate twice.

The four students read at the library.

The circus elephants paraded through town.

Underline the simple subject once and the simple predicate twice.

The eagles flew over the school. The bird chirped loudly.

Write a paragraph on this topic: "What I Think About Grammar." (Is using capitalization, punctuation, and a variety of words important? Why? Do you like writing stories? Do you like the jingles? Are you a better writer because of grammar lessons?)

Appendix K
4th Grade Posttest

Exercise 1: Tell how each word is used in the sentence by writing the part of speech above the word. Use the abbreviations that are familiar to you.

1. Ouch! That big black cat scratched me on the leg with his claw!

2. My sister gave her bird a new bell for his new cage.

3. The big yellow dog barked loudly in the backyard of my house.

4. The man in the purple striped suit is my favorite uncle.

5. My soccer team will win our first championship tonight.

6. What does an Adjective modify? _____

7. What are the Adjective questions? _____

8. What does an Adverb modify? _____

9. What are the Adverb questions? _____

Exercise 2: Put capital letters and marks of punctuation as needed in the sentences below.

10. I gave sam my gold fish to my sister on june 1 1999

11. joe asked jack will we get to chicago illinois in time to see the kickoff?

Exercise 3: List these present tense and past tense helping verbs in the proper boxes below.
am, do, been, did, have, was, is, has, were, are, had

Present tense	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.
Past tense	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.		

On the back of this pretest, write a paragraph on this topic: "What I Think About English."

Appendix L
8th Grade Posttest

POSTTEST – PATTERNS 1 –5

Exercise 1: Tell how each word is used in the sentences by writing the part of speech above the word. Use the abbreviations that are familiar to you. Finish each sentence using the SM flow.

1. Gee! The brave, attentive firefighter had two large hoses from the truck on the burning house.

2. Tomorrow she will not go to her usual place in the office with her papers.

3. Throughout the day, the teacher read the class a very important notice.

4. A very colorful shirt from my favorite store had a well-known logo.

5. In our background on the left my basketball hoop hung on Dad's tool shed.

6. At times during a rainy day a gray sky can be dreary and scary.

7. What does an Adverb modify? _____

8. What are the Adverb questions? _____

9. What does an Adjective modify? _____

10. What are the Adverb questions? _____

Exercise 2: Put capital letters and marks of punctuation as needed in the sentences below.

11. yes mrs s l jones our teacher showed sarah bobby and ann artwork by van gough

12. is the senator from springfield il speaking at the assembly bob asked the lady at the door

Exercise 3: List these present tense and past tense helping verbs in the proper boxes below:

would, shall, will have, was being, had been, am, should, were, are, is, did, might have

Present tense:	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.
Past Tense:	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.		

Exercise 4: Write a paragraph on this topic: **"What I Think About English."** You may continue on the back.

Appendix M
Parent Postsurvey

Grammar Survey: Parents

Your children have been involved in a holistic, systematic study of grammar using the Shurley Method of grammar instruction, textbooks, literature, and their own writing. As we begin the second semester of school, I would like feedback regarding any growth you have observed in your child's written and oral language skills. For the purpose of this study, the definition of grammar includes using correct punctuation, grammar, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, and capitalization.

Use this scale to answer the following questions. Circle the number that expresses your feelings most accurately.

5 – almost always 4-often 3-sometimes 2-rarely 1-unsure

1. How often does your child use correct grammar when speaking?

5 4 3 2 1

Comments: (Please note areas of improvement.)

2. How often does your child use correct grammar when writing?

5 4 3 2 1

Comments: (Please note areas of improvement.)

3. Do you find yourself correcting your child's grammar?

5 4 3 2 1

Comments: (Please note specific improvement if applicable)

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